A

SECOND LETTER

ON THE

DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY;

ADDRESSED TO THE

BAPTIST SOCIETY,

AT

GUILSBOROUGH, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

3. Sharman (E) K

"Have we not all ONE Father?"

"Hath not ONE GOD made us?"

"Thou believeſt that there is ONE GOD. Thou doeſt well."

"I obſerve that old Men ſeldom have any Advantage of new "Diſcoveries; becauſe they are beſide a Way of Thinking "they have been ſo long uſed to. Reſolved, if ever I live to "Years, that I will be impartial to hear the Reaſons of all pre-"tended Diſcoveries, and receive them, if rational, how long "ſoever I have been uſed to another Way of Thinking."

PRESIDENT EDWARDS.

"Go thou and do likewiſe."

WORSHIP THE FATHER.

"PROVE ALL THINGS."

"HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD."

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BRITISH MUSEUM

A

SECOND LETTER

ON THE

DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

DEAR CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

SINCE writing my former Letter on the Doctrine of the Trinity, I have not abated in my reſpects for you; and, from what I have obſerved in your general behaviour, I have no reaſon to think you have any the worſe opinion of me.

From what I can learn, ſome of your prejudices are removed, and you are led to think that the difference between us is not quite ſo great as was repreſented, and that you had indulged ſome unwarrantable cenſures againſt me and my opinions without a juſt foundation.

I do hope that there is ſome conſiderable alteration in ſome of your diſpoſitions for the better; and this may ſerve as an apology for my writing to you this ſecond epiſtle. You will allow whatever differences there may have taken place that are detrimental to the intereſt of real religion ought to be removed; and whatever unbecoming tempers any of us may have indulged, they ought to be ſubdued.

Further, to ſhew the abſurdity of adhering to human creeds in matters of religion, and to call your attention to the ſcripture manner of worſhiping Almighty God, is my end in taking up my pen again to write on this ſubject. The little knowledge that I have acquired of human nature has taught me, that it is no ſmall attainment to diveſt ourſelves of all prejudices and undue prepoſſeſſions, and come to the Bible with a view to learn what that contains and practiſe accordingly. There is no dangerous conſequences from adhering to this rule; all ought to come as near as poſſible.

It will be granted that thoſe who have made the greateſt progreſs in knowledge, know but in part; and that they are capable of making far greater improvement, and, that every thing that retards the progreſs of truth and virtue is not of God, and therefore it is our duty to attempt to remove them. It is poſſible we may be miſtaken in our judgements what theſe objects are, but ſo long as we keep the right end in view, and purſue proper means for information, I do not know that we are culpable for our conduct. The perfection of ſcripture knowledge is not attainable at once, but, like all other ſcience, matures by ſlow degrees. But it has this peculiar property above all other knowledge, that an increaſe of it always leads to an improvement of moral virtue; and this is the reaſon why we ſhould aim at perfection, becauſe there is no danger of going to exceſs. And there is no other criterion (that I know of) to determine whether our knowledge is *genuine*, and that we are actually making progreſs therein, than by daily increaſing in the duties of chriſtian morality.

It is not merely to oppoſe your ſpeculative notions of a trinity in unity that I addreſs you in this public manner, but becauſe of that *unchriſtian* ſpirit

ſpirit diſcovered towards me by many. This like the ſtar, called Wormwood, St. John ſaw fall from heaven, embitters all the ſtreams of chriſtian affection, and renders it neceſſary that I ſhould attempt to ſtop its baneful influence, leſt the world ſhould have reaſon to conclude that our religion tolerated us to hate and devour one another. If you had a mind to eſtabliſh this as a maxim among you, and ſubſcribe to it as your creed, that two and three are equal to ſeven, I ſhould not think it worth my while to confute your propoſition or diſturb your peace, if you connected no bad conſequences to it: But if you inſiſted that I ſhould ſet my hand to it as true, and inflict a ſevere puniſhment if I refuſed, I ſhould think it my duty to deny your requiſition, & give reaſons for my diſſent. I do not inſiſt on your ſtudying Metaphyſics to be able to explain to the world how three is one, and one are three; (leave that to the learned Doctors to decide who are ſkill'd in ſolving hard queſtions) but I wiſh to be a mean of rooting out all unlovely diſpoſitions, and promoting the ſpirit of Chriſt among you.

I do not ſuppoſe that it is the ſimple doctrine itſelf that generates evil paſſions, but it is that which your teachers have connected with it that occaſions ſuch angry contention. It is their making it of ſuch vaſt *importance* that leads you to treat others with ſuch contempt, and conſign them over to deſtruction for not embracing it. It is true there are but few that will tell you to your face that you are ſure to be *damned*, but you will not converſe long before you will find that is their meaning, though they are aſhamed to ſpeak it out. It is almoſt as common with many to uſe ſuch language, as for ſome people to be guilty of prophane ſwearing, and they ſeem to have as little ſenſe of what they affirm as ſuch characters.

Far be it from me to cenſure Trinitarians, for want of piety, as a body; no, I conſider them as highly deſerving reſpect, for the uprightneſs of their motives, and exemplarineſs of their lives. Notwithſtanding I cannot but conſider their zeal for this doctrine as highly unbecoming their profeſſion, *becauſe*, it leads them to many unwarrantable cenſures towards thoſe who differ from them, and this ariſes from making ſuch ſentiments more important than the ſcripture will juſtify.* This principle appears to be at the bottom of all the miſchief. It is this that excites hatred and malevolence and ſeparates chief friends. Mere ſpeculative errors do little or no hurt to ſociety, but it is making them conſequential that is the bane of morality and the diſgrace of religion. Their being ſanctioned with penal laws, or what is ſtill worſe, propagated in the name of the Almighty, ‡ that renders them ſo pernicious, and their conſequences ſo fatal to chriſtianity.

I think there muſt be ſomething that you have learned from ſome quarter (no matter where) that

* Thus declares the Rev. Mr. Hawes (in Serm. before the Miſſionary Society, where it was ſaid that they had preached the funeral of bigotry and rejoiced over the grave) "To deny the eternal glory and Godhead of Chriſt is *everlaſting death.*" Query, Did they not bury bigotry *alive?* if ſo, no wonder at ſuch a ſpeedy reſurrection. Although the reviewer, in the Evang. Mag. calls ſuch language inveighing againſt thoſe who do not embrace ſuch notions by the name of "gentle ſeverity," Does it not deſerve the name of eccleſiaſtical *tyranny?* claiming dominion over conſcience, and aſſuming the prerogative of God.

‡ Your miniſter, to prevent your enquiring & ſet himſelf up as an oracle, but a few days ago, aſſerted in public that, if he was wrong in worſhipping three perſons as one God, Jeſus Chriſt *taught him.* Add only as much confidence in the ſcale as you are wanting of evidence and you need not be afraid of its riſing.

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wants unlearning, becauſe, you never are influenced about any other ſubject like this. You will hear my objections with candour and attention on almoſt any other part of divinity, but if I attempt to ſpeak about this, you are frighted as if I were going to ſerve a copy of a writ on you, or drag you to priſon, or elſe expreſs the greateſt contempt, as if I wanted to draw you into ſome very wicked practices, or rob you of ſome valuable treaſure. And it will excite you to break all the ties of friendſhip, (however dear before) and lead you to treat me in ſuch a manner that is diſgraceful to humanity, as well as diſhonourable to chriſtianity. I do not gather my intelligence of this from hearſay, but I write what I know to be true, and teſtify what I have experienced. You have had occaſion to exclude ſeveral members for immoral conduct; but not the vileſt that was at any time excluded was ever treated with half that contempt that I have been for the crime of worſhiping God according to the dictates of my conſcience and his revealed will. No, the crime of hereſy exceeds all crimes; even murderers have met with compaſſion where *heretics* could find none! I could bring many things to ſhew to what exceſs you have carried your reſentment againſt me; but I will only mention one as a ſpecimen. It will ſerve to diſcover how far your zeal for orthodoxy deſerves the name of chriſtian piety, and what reaſon there is for you (and all who have encouraged you) to be aſhamed of your proceedings. There is one man that lives in your village that is notorious for wickedneſs to a proverb. He goes by the name of Drunken———, Swearing———. This man was preferred before me as a character deſerving much greater reſpect: This ringleader of iniquity was held up as far more fit to be truſted

with

with the education and morals of your families than ſuch a peſtilent character as mine. Now, Brethren, I will appeal to your conſciences, I will appeal to the public, I will appeal to the Oracles of God, whether ſuch conduct is conſiſtent with chriſtianity.

What makes me think it my duty to addreſs you again at this time is, that our difference is ſo very trifling* about doctrine, that if each of our opinions

* I find many Trinitarians are much offended with me for ſaying thus; they tell you that there is an eſſential and very *important* difference, and that you are quite juſtifiable in your treatment of me. Mine is a very great crime and I ought to be beaten with many ſtripes for daring to run on their "*thick boſſes.*" I really ſhould be glad to know wherein our difference lies, and what it is that forms my criminality, that I might repent of my great wickedneſs and find mercy, if any could be had. They all acknowledge with me that there is but one ſupreme God, and that he is a ſimple ſpirit, without any compoſition, ſeparation or diviſion, the only being that we can conceive or prove that is a perfect *unity*. Now when I worſhip this being in the perſon of the Father I worſhip the whole of Deity, this they will allow; and ſuppoſe they imagine (for it can be nothing elſe) this ſame God to exiſt ſomehow in the Son and Spirit with the Father, when they worſhip him in this view, ſtill they worſhip the ſame being as I do, and they (to keep up their credit for orthodoxy or any other name) addreſs the Son and Spirit ſeparately as God; yet they do not mean that there are two other ſupreme beings which they call upon at another time as two other Gods; No, call them as many names and perſons as their teachers pleaſe, they appear to mean no more than one after all; neither do I think it poſſible after all their zeal for three beings that they can form any other ideas of a ſpirit than one ſimple intelligence. They ſay that Jeſus Chriſt was a man poſſeſſed of fleſh and blood, and that this man always remains diſtinct from God, and that humanity was never turned into Deity; and when they worſhip the Father as the only true God through the Mediator, I do not ſuppoſe they mean to approach the Father through another divine being, but through the man Chriſt Jeſus: and thus I agree with them and St. Paul, That there is one God

even

nions were but understood, there would be nothing to create disaffection; however I am persuaded, it would be a disgrace to any of us if it should. I know that the alarm-bell is rung from many pulpits about the consequence of my sentiments; this keeps you from enquiring and strengthens your prejudices, and makes you say, we cannot esteem you as heretofore, except you acknowledge your error and recant. Seriously, brethren, it grieves me to think that there should be any separation in our affections about speculative notions, when we are cordially united in Bible-sentiments, if we would allow to each other the right of private judgement.

I think it is a disgrace to protestants to forbid free

even the Father, and one Mediator between this God and man, the man Christ Jesus:

In this the Scripture's very clear,
Did we but all its laws revere;
But still there's something else, they say,
I'm much to *blame* to cast away.
I must believe that *one is three*,
If not—be *damn'd for heresy*;
Yes, this is all that they can prove,
And—'tis enough to lose their love;
To lose their love,—Oh that's not all!
They'll stigmatize your name and call
You ——— What?—I can't find words!
For these have fail'd—and turn'd to swords!
To swords—ah more, to flames they've gone!
For not pronouncing *three is one!!*
A crime so great—is ne'er forgiv'n
On earth—or in the court of heav'n!!!
I ask—From whence such codes arise,
From man—or God above the skies?
Did Jesus Christ such laws ordain
That man for truth should e'er be slain?
From K--gs and Priests and human creeds
Such *monstrous wickedness proceeds*
To justify such horrid deeds.
From all such things I'll *clear* God's name.
On *Rome* and *Hell* cast all the blame!

enquiry

with the education and morals of your families than ſuch a peſtilent character as mine. Now, Brethren, I will appeal to your conſciences, I will appeal to the public, I will appeal to the Oracles of God, whether ſuch conduct is conſiſtent with chriſtianity.

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Yes, this is all that they can prove,
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To loſe their love,—Oh that's not all!
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From all ſuch things I'll *clear* God's name.
On *Rome* and *Hell* caſt all the blame!

enquiry

enquiry; it always appears to me that whenever they diſcover any thing of that, they have got too much of the high prieſt. All tyranny eccleſiaſtical and political has been ſupported and propagated by ſuch means, and the moſt extravagant things kept in repute by thundering out the dreadful conſequences of examining. But truth invites the critic's eye to ſearch it in open day light. I am perſuaded (with Biſhop Watſon) "that the conſequences of ſearching after truth may be ſubverſive of ſyſtems of ſuperſtition, but it never can be injurious to the rights of the human race," but is the only way to find out and propagate divine truth. I know that free enquiry has been conſidered by many as unfriendly to the cauſe of true religion and leading to leſſen the importance of Bible principles, but to me it appears quite the reverſe. It muſt be allowed that there is nothing but what men have abuſed; and *ſome* have gone to that extreme to ſuppoſe that principles were of no importance. But it is generally found that ſcepticiſm leads to indolence, and indolence opens the door to licentiouſneſs, and is the ready road to ruin. Principles appear to me to be the *ſoul* of action; and the more the mind is ſtored with good principles the more it will be capacitated to act for God. You might as well expect a man that was half dead with the palſy to be one of the moſt uſeful and active men in the community as an unprincipled mind to be the beſt teacher or the greateſt moraliſt. But I cannot poſſeſs the beſt principles in the world to any advantage, or propagate them with ſucceſs, without I enjoy them independent of all others; this is the only way to aſcertain their true value, and ſtimulate me to exert myſelf to promote them in the world. No man is likely to be very active in promoting that which he does

not

not conſider important: It a ſenſe of the worth of the prize to be won that will lead a man to ſtake his all on the deciſion of a race or the fate of a battle. As I have nothing but truth in view, I have no reaſon to be terrified at thoſe *bugbears* conſequences; and as I conſider it of infinite importance I think nothing too dear to ſacrifice to obtain it.

A miniſter of my acquaintance obſerved to me the other day that he believes that the Doctrine of the Trinity was ſo very plainly revealed, that if an African was to come and read the Bible, as an hiſtory, he was ſure to find three perſons or beings to be worſhipped as one ſupreme God. I acknowledge I quite differed from him in opinion, and ſo firmly believe that he would find but one being that was poſſeſſed of ſupreme Deity, and to be worſhiped as the only true God. In addition to what I have already ſaid on the ſubject, I would ſubmit to your attention the following conſiderations, and wiſh you to weigh them impartially in the ſcale of conſcience, in the ſcale of reaſon, and in the ſcale of ſcripture, and you will be able to determine which of our conjectures is neareſt the truth.

Is it not aſtoniſhing, that although we profeſs to receive all our information from the ſame ſource, yet vary very much in our concluſions. What one can ſee written as with a ſun-beam another rejects for want of evidence, and what one conſiders as a fundamental error another accounts a fundamental truth. Some can believe almoſt every thing without any difficulty, while many are continually wavering, although they take great pains to gain ſatisfaction. The cauſe of ſuch a diverſity of opinion is not in the truth itſelf, but in the warped minds of men. But we will ſuppoſe this African

to be diveſted of thoſe prepoſſeſſions that divide the chriſtian world, and take up the Bible with a ſincere view to learn how to worſhip the God of the chriſtians. Let us imagine he underſtands ſo much of the Engliſh language as to know the difference between the plural and ſingular noun, and juſt able to read the Bible—He takes it up, opens the ſacred page with a determination to receive the truth, and he finds it ſpeaks of a God in the ſingular number. If it ſpeaks in the firſt perſon it is I, me, mine, myſelf, &c. and if God is mentioned in the ſecond perſon, it is expreſſed by thou, thine, &c. He turns over each leaf till he finds a thouſand places that expreſs the name of God: Now out of this number probably he will find nine hundred and ninety nine that ſpeak of God in the ſingular number. This leads me to differ from my friend, and to ſuppoſe that the African would conclude the God of the chriſtians was only one perſon.

What if this enquirer was to proceed to read for further information reſpecting the character of this God, and he was to find that abſolute ſovereignty was alone aſcribed to this one perſon, would not he have reaſon to conclude that he only was ſupreme Deity. As ſoon as he underſtood the meaning of words he would learn what the appellation of a father implied, and he would find this given to none other but the only true God; and he would find that this being is called the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in more than twenty paſſages, as well as the God and Father of all Mankind; I cannot think that he would be at any loſs to know from this repreſentation whether Jeſus Chriſt, who was begotten by the Father, was the ſame God. I think it would be as eaſy to perſuade him that his aged parent, which he left in Africa, was the ſame with himſelf. But if this ſhould not ſatisfy him

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St. Paul will repeatedly inform him, that there is but one God even the Father; and Jeſus Chriſt will confirm him in the ſame truth, by telling him, that himſelf had no hand in creation, but that *he* (not we) made them male and female; and, that the father is the only true God, and the only being Jeſus Chriſt ever worſhipped, or commanded his Apoſtles to worſhip, as God. Thus it appears that he would have no more ideas of Jeſus Chriſt being the ſame God as the Father than himſelf being the ſame perſon as he from whom he deſcended. As he proceeded to read the hiſtory of Jeſus Chriſt, he would be confirmed in the ſame truth, by obſerving that he diſdains all ſovereignty; tho' his followers ſay it belongs to him. If this enquirer was to hear you confidently aſſert that Jeſus Chriſt was poſſeſſed of abſolute ſovereignty he would naturally aſk, How was it that he ſhould never in any one action that he performed, or word that he ſpake, make it known, but always declare the *contrary?* If he credited Jeſus Chriſt would not he conclude that you muſt be miſtaken? Suppoſing he was to read to you the following paſſages, and inſiſt on it that if they were true, they proved againſt your doctrine. Attend to his language. "I came not of myſelf to do mine own will." "I came in my Father's name, I ſeek not mine own glory." "If I honour myſelf my honour is nothing, it is my father that honoureth me, of whom ye ſay, he is your God." "I can of mine own ſelf do nothing." "All power is given unto me." "All things whatſoever thou haſt given me are of thee." "To ſit at my right hand, and at my left is not mine to give, but it ſhall be given to whom it is appointed of my Father." "It is not for you to know the times or the ſeaſons which the father hath put in his own power." My father is greater than all."

And as he found Jeſus Chriſt diſdained all pretences to ſovereignty while on earth, he would inform you that he did the ſame now he is in heaven, and will do at the day of Judgement. He tells St. John, after he had promiſed many great bleſſings to the Church, that he would "give them power over the nations, &c." "But this," ſays he, "*I received of my Father.*" As he claims no right to ſovereignty in heaven, neither will he after he has finiſhed his mediatorial work. "Then cometh the end that he will give up the Kingdom to God, even the Father," and for what end? that he may reign with him? No, *But the Son himſelf alſo ſhall be in ſubjection* * *to God the Father*, that HE may be all in all: For of him, and through him, and to him are all things.

After repeating theſe paſſages, what, if this ſtranger was to ſay to you, My Engliſh Friends, Was your Bible given you to be underſtood according to its own language, and is it poſſible for an illiterate man as I am to know its meaning, or muſt I learn Hebrew and Greek, underſtand Philoſophy and Metaphyſics, before I can decide what I am to believe? Probably you would anſwer, No, you are at liberty to think and judge for yourſelf, and nothing more is neceſſary than ſincerity of heart. This would ſatisfy him, and he would recapitulate what he had read, and intreat your attention to the inferences that he could not help

* If what St. Paul ſays in 1 Cor. ch. 15, is allowed to be true the Trinitarian Doctrine cannot ſtand. He plainly declares that Chriſt will be in ſubjection to God: they ſay he will reign as the eternal Jehovah. I would aſk you, as in the preſence of God, which is likely to be true?

drawing

drawing from ſuch premiſes, * which no doubt would be as follows: The father of a family is always conſidered as the firſt and chief from whom all deſcend, God the father therefore muſt be the only ſupreme being, becauſe Jeſus Chriſt was his ſon which proceeded from him. Jeſus Chriſt muſt know whether he was poſſeſſed of ſovereign power from himſelf or whether he derived all from another; as he declares the latter was the caſe, my Engliſh brethren, muſt not I believe him? He does not claim it now he is in heaven, nor will he poſſeſs it after the day of judgement; this his inſpired apoſtles plainly tell me; therefore I think it wrong to unite Jeſus with the father as the ſame God becauſe he commands me to worſhip the father alone as the true God.—Muſt not you have been miſinformed? or your Bible cannot be true.

* The way that your miniſter explains away the ſenſe of the above plain ſcriptures is by telling you that theſe things only reſpect Chriſt's human nature, and that he acted as the father's ſervant while here, yet he always remained the unchangeable God. But if you would pay any regard to the meaning of language, and think for your ſelves, you would not admit ſuch abſurdities, nor blame me for rejecting them. I would ſubmit a few queſtions to his conſideration, and others who may make uſe of ſuch unintelligible language. Where does he receive his authority for his aſſertions, from heaven or of men? If Chriſt was a divine perſon, how can we account for it that he ſhould always be repreſented as poſſeſſing no divine power of his own, but was anointed and wholly fitted for his work by the power of another? I ſhould like to know what kind of a divine perſon Chriſt was without any divine power? How can he prove that Chriſt came from heaven and acted as the father's ſervant except we allow that the nature or ſubſtance of Deity was divided? A ſervant on earth and a ſovereign in heaven, and yet not divided, wants explanation. What is meant by two, three, four or five, infinites, and how can an infinite being be in ſubjection? When he makes uſe of ſuch language, does not he darken counſel with words without knowledge?

After he had thus explained to you what Jeſus Chriſt ſaid of himſelf, he would call your attention to the language of the Father, and inform you that he claims the right of ſovereignty alone, although you will not allow it. He would aſk you what the following paſſages meant if they did not dictate that ſovereignty belonged to one perſon, the only God and father of all. Thus ſaith the Lord, he that created the heavens and ſtretched them out, he that ſpread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it, I am Jehovah, and beſides me there is no God, I know not any. Behold my ſervant (ſpeaking of Chriſt) whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my ſoul delighteth, I will hold thine hand and will keep thee. And he ſhall ſtand and feed in the ſtrength of the Lord his God. Every thing that belongs to the perſon of Chriſt was by the appointment and diſpoſal of the Father. "A prophet which the Lord God raiſed up like unto Moſes, He put his words in his mouth and he ſpake in his name. God anointed Jeſus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghoſt and with power, and he went about doing good, for God was with him. Called of God to the office of prieſt as was Aaron. Him did God exalt by raiſing him from the dead and gave him a kingdom, dominion and power. Made him head of all things, and put all things in ſubjection unto him. Ye are Chriſt's and Chriſt is God's. For of him, (the Father) and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory as the ſupreme God for ever and ever." Suppoſing, after repeating theſe paſſages, this ſtranger was to declare that if ſuch language did not aſcribe ſupreme ſovereignty * to the

* As Jeſus Chriſt derives all from another being proves he is not the ſupreme God, ſo thoſe perfections in the Father, which

the Father alone, there was no ſuch being to be found in your Bible, would he not ſpeak the truth? If you was to deny this, would he not be ready to ſay, I will go back again into my own country and to my Father's Gods; for theſe chriſtians will not allow their God, whom they ſay knows all things, to ſet forth his own character;

which he poſſeſſes alone, are abſolutely *incommunicable* to any other being. To give up this appears giving up all right ideas of Jehovah. Self-origination can only be predicable of one. To be underived, and exiſt from no other is the peculiar property of the Father alone. From everlaſting to everlaſting he is the unchangeable God. Abſolute Eternity can never belong to two perſons or beings. The Son is ſaid to be begotten of the Father; and if there is any meaning in words, the Father muſt be before the Son who deſcended from him. As the Father being alone underived proves his ſimple unity and eternity, ſo his abſolute ſovereignty proves he is the only ſupreme God. Not a being that has a name within his vaſt empire but owe their exiſtence and are wholly at the diſpoſal of the Father. "For his pleaſure they are and were created." All things are of him, who hath reconciled us to himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt. All things that Jeſus Chriſt poſſeſſed where given him of God "Thine they were and thou gaveſt them me." Chriſt is God's as much as all other creatures. And as ſovereignty is an incommunicable perfection in the Father, ſo is his immutability. Of him alone it can be ſaid I am God and change not. When the advocates for Chriſt's divinity bring thoſe texts to prove it (which they often do) that ſpeak of his mutation, I am aſtoniſhed at their abſurdity: To ſay that a being who is without any variableneſs or ſhadow of turning (which is eſſential to Deity) ſhould become poor; poſſeſs abſolute dominion, and yet be a ſervant under ſubjection; ſhould be infinitely happy, and yet for a time be in a ſtate of ſufferings; is abſolutely impoſſible, except we can prove that the Bible is to be underſtood quite contrary to what it declares, or that language has no meaning. If men's minds were not exceedingly warped by prejudice they could not admit ſuch inconſiſtency. For it appears evident that theſe perfections, peculiar to ſupreme Deity, dwell in the Father alone: and, if Jeſus Chriſt is to be credited, the Father is the only being to be worſhipped as the ſelf-exiſtent and independent God.

for though he repeatedly declares he is but *one*, they will ſay that he is *three*; and when he affirms that Chriſt is his beloved Son, they will have it that he means himſelf. However being rather of an inquiſitive turn, and thinking ſo many great men could not be miſtaken, he conſents to ſtop a little longer, and wiſhes to aſk you a few queſtions about the third perſon you call God. On looking over his Bible he finds more difficulty reſpecting the diſtinct perſonality of the Spirit than either the Son or the Father. He was quite confounded to find Jeſus Chriſt whom you ſaid was a divine perſon declaring he had no divine power; but is more ſo to hear you talk of the perſon of the Spirit whom he cannot find ever exiſted. He recollects that in his country there were gods many and lords many, but in your Bible he reads "To us there is but one God, even the Father." This perſon he learns is a ſpirit, indiviſible, uncompounded, a ſimple undivided being, a perfect unit. "Thou believeſt that there is one God, thou doeſt well." He would call your attention to what the Scripture ſays about this *divine perſon*, the Spirit; he thinks it can mean no ſuch thing as a diſtinct agent from the Father, but only the fulfilment of God's promiſe and the exertion of his power. Although there are ſome few paſſages which ſpeak of him as being ſent, &c. it is ſpeaking, he thinks, according to the eaſtern language, for, ſays he, if he came from the Father, Deity muſt be divided, for when my father ſent me into England, we were ſeparated, he did not ſend himſelf.

When Jeſus Chriſt promiſes to ſend the Holy Ghoſt he explains his meaning to his Diſciples: He commanded them to tarry at Jeruſalem, but he did not tell them they were to expect another divine agent or perſon, which no doubt he would

if

if that had been a truth, but to wait for the promiſe of the Father to be endued with power from on high; and it is evident they underſtood it in this light, as St. Peter informs us, that the promiſe of God in Joel was fulfilled, that God would pour out his ſpirit, and that now God had granted to the Gentiles the gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, and they began to propheſy, &c. On the day of Pentecoſt, we have an account of their praiſing God, and in the acts of the apoſtles many inſtances of their worſhipping Jehovah. But as a full demonſtration that they did not conſider the Spirit as a divine perſon, they never unite him with the Father in their petitions or aſcriptions of praiſe to God. Not only would this foreigner object to your doctrine becauſe it deſtroyed the unity of God, but he could prove that the apoſtles believed no ſuch ſentiments. Certainly, if they had, we ſhould have met with ſome account of it (he would ſay) in their writings.* If this man was to attend your

* I do not know that there is any thing inconſiſtent with reaſon or ſcripture to allow that the Holy Ghoſt is an agent, or perſon, created of God to execute the work of redemption; although it appears to me that the Apoſtles did not view it in this light, but only as an extraordinary exertion of the power of God. As it is called the promiſe of the Father, and their always addreſſing the Father to ſend it proves that they did not conſider it as a divine perſon; ſo the effects produced ſeem to evidence it to be the fulfilment of the Father's promiſe and not ſending another being. But granting a diſtinct perſonality to the Spirit, as it is ſaid to proceed from the Father, it cannot be the ſame God: If people would pay any regard to language they could not admit ſuch abſurdities; but they have been ſo long uſed to ſuch unmeaning phraſes that they can receive them as excellent without any examination. The Father is a ſimple Spirit, one intelligent being, and to ſay that he ſends another being, called the Holy Ghoſt, is to ſay, in plain words, that Deity is two Spirits, as evident as Eliſha and his ſervant Gehazi were two men; and divides Deity as much

your place of worſhip only one Lord's day, your miniſter was ſure to inform him that he muſt unite two more beings with the Father as God. But if he regards the conduct of the inſpired apoſtles he can learn no ſuch mode from them. Therefore he muſt conclude that your doctrine is a mere human tradition, or that the inſpired apoſtles were miſtaken.

You would think this man did not proceed in a proper manner if he was to profeſs to learn your mode of worſhip, from a regiſter of your anceſtors, in a narration of your journeys, or from your common converſation; but would demand him to attend your public aſſemblies, or hear ſome expreſs command or proper information. So when he talked of following ſcripture directions of worſhipping God, he was not likely to refer you to the battles of Joſhua, the hard names in Ezra, or the viſions of Ezekiel, but where it is expreſsly declared the

as when the prophet ſent his ſervant after Naaman he was parted from him. If you will but lay aſide your ſcholaſtic terms, and ſeriouſly attend to the feelings of your minds when you pray to God for to give you his Holy Spirit to make you holy, &c. I think you will find your meaning (if you have any) much the ſame as mine, that God would work in you to do his will, and that you might be fitted to glorify him; and you would have no ideas of another perſon being ſent or given. I think it is a diſgrace to the profeſſing world, and a great impediment to the ſpread of chriſtianity, to introduce and contend for ſuch *unintelligible* jargon, that tends to perplex the mind and pervert revelation. People come to the Bible prepoſſeſſed with the notion of three perſons to be worſhipped as God, and then torture the ſcripture and pervert and contradict their reaſon to confirm it, when there is no ſuch thing to be found there. It is as plain from Scripture that Jeſus Chriſt commanded us to worſhip but one perſon, the Father, as ſupreme God, as that there is but one Sun in the firmament; and when you have proved the contrary, I will undertake to prove there are many Suns that give light on the earth.

people

people worſhipped their God, and from the poſitive commands of Jeſus Chriſt. * It is in their holy aſſemblies that we are informed how they addreſſed the Almighty. We have many ſpecimens left on record for our imitation by Moſes and the Prophets, Chriſt and his Apoſtles, how we ought to worſhip the great God. I have frequently attended your place of worſhip, but never that I recollect, but you connected the Son and Spirit with the Father, together to be equally worſhipped and glorified. But is it not very extraordinary that there is *no one* inſtance in the Bible

* It has often been affirmed that the Doctrine of the Trinity is much plainer revealed in the New Teſtament than the Old; whereas I think that the unity of God is more clearly pointed out (if poſſible) and leſs foundation for that opinion in the Sayings of Chriſt and his Apoſtles than in thoſe of Moſes and the Prophets. Chriſt eſtabliſhes the unity of the perſon of the Father as ſupreme God ſo fully as to leave no reaſonable doubt to every unprejudiced mind who is the proper object of divine worſhip. Hear, O Iſrael, (ſays he) The Lord our God is one Lord, and declares that the time was now come, when the true worſhippers ſhould worſhip the Father who was a Spirit, and the "only true God," in ſpirit and in truth. So likewiſe is St. Paul as expreſs when ſpeaking of the God of the Chriſtians, in oppoſition to thoſe of Heathens, who had gods many and lords many; but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things. And leſt we ſhould miſtake the Apoſtle and think that Jeſus Chriſt is the ſame God, becauſe he is called God on account of the dignity of his office, he repeatedly declares, that there is but one God, *even* the Father. If the ſingle appellation of Father—a Spirit—and the only true God, doth not expreſs the ſingle perſonality of ſupreme Deity, I think I may defy you to prove that any one paſſage in the Bible hath any meaning. It has aſtoniſhed me much of late to hear with what confidence many aſſert, that there are three perſons or beings to be worſhipped as the one ſupreme God, as a Bible truth, when there is not the leaſt foundation in ſcripture for any ſuch doctrine, but it is abſolutely contrary to its plain and repeated declarations.

that God was worſhipped in that manner. If your miniſter was to leave out his creed and worſhip the Father alone as God, as the apoſtles did, I queſtion, but he would be ſuſpected of hereſy; many have been for only omitting at the cloſe of their worſhip your unintelligible language, "To him, thyſelf and another, as the one God, be aſcribed equal glory, &c." But if we attend to the expreſs commands of Chriſt we ſhall be taught quite the contrary.

This ſtranger would further add, that your mode of worſhip is not only unſcriptural, (and ought to be rejected) but, if the directions, and practice of Chriſt and his apoſtles have the force of *law*, it is poſſitively *forbidden*. Thou ſhalt have no other Gods but me. In that day ſhall there be one Lord, and his name one. When Chriſt was about to leave his Diſciples, and go to his God and their God, to his Father and their Father, he gives them a moſt ſolemn charge to follow his ſteps, and obſerve all things which he commanded them. As he had taught them that the Father was the only true God, ſo he had often united with them in worſhipping him in that character. As this was the manner he worſhipped God with his diſciples while here, his directions were very plain that they ſhould worſhip the Father alone as Jehovah when he was gone. He gives them a pattern how they ſhould begin and conclude their prayers.* When ye enter in your cloſet pray to your Father and ſay, Our Father, &c. and

* I was at a place of public worſhip, lately, where many of you frequently attend, and the miniſter, to ſhew his zeal for orthodoxy, uttered the following extraordinary prayer; thus he began, "O thou, that liveſt and waſt dead, who ſufferedſt on the croſs for our ſins, but art now exalted to heaven; We

and inſtructs them how to cloſe, but not a word about himſelf & another being equally worſhipped and glorified, as your miniſter would make you believe; but, Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory. Almoſt the laſt words he ſaid to his diſciples, before his crucifixion, expreſsly forbids their worſhipping him as God when he was gone to heaven.* "In that day ye ſhall aſk me no-

We are frail & fickle, but thou art the unchangeable Jehovah. We acknowledge that we have ſinned againſt thee and forfeited thy favour. O our God, we bleſs thee that thou haſt appointed for us a Mediator, laid help upon him and accepted him on our behalf, and placed him at thy right hand as our only advocate, &c. We come unto thee, as our only God and Father, in his name. For his ſake, whom thou haſt choſen out of the people, bleſs us, O our Father.—Unto Him, Thyſelf and the Holy Ghoſt, as unto three diſtinct perſons but the one ſelf-exiſtent and unchangeable Jehovah, be aſcribed equal and undivided praiſes, as is juſtly due, now and for ever. Amen.

Do, brethren, try if you can make ſuch language conſiſtent with ſcripture and common ſenſe; for ſurely it appears quite contrary to both!!

* Some have confidently affirmed that Jeſus Chriſt muſt be God becauſe the ſcripture ſays he was worſhipped; I think they might as well ſay that Abraham paid divine worſhip to the ſons of Heth, or that David or Daniel was worſhipped as God, becauſe the term is applied to them. It is well known that the term ſignifies to bow down, to pay reſpect, &c. That it does not ſignify divine worſhip, when applied to Chriſt, is evident, becauſe the ſoldiers that mocked him at the ſame time are ſaid to bow the knee and worſhip him. As Jeſus Chriſt never commanded us to unite him with the Father when we worſhip God, and, as his followers never did worſhip in that manner, for us to do ſo appears to me to be wiſe above what is written. Either I muſt diſregard the commands of Jeſus Chriſt or reject your manner of worſhip. He commands me to aſk the Father in his name, but he never directs me to unite him with the Father, to pray unto or praiſe as the one ſupreme God; Query, What authority have I to do ſo?

thing,

thing, but ſhall aſk the Father in my name; "Verily, verily I ſay unto you, whatſoever ye ſhall aſk the Father in my name he will give it you." Can any thing be more expreſs to prove that Chriſt never deſigned that his followers ſhould worſhip him with the Father as the one God? I think, we may reply it is impoſſible. We are to obſerve all things which Chriſt commanded us; he commanded us to worſhip the Father alone as the ſupreme God, therefore it muſt be right to follow his commands. He is our only maſter. After this African had learned what was the will of Jeſus Chriſt from his own lips, by looking over the hiſtory of his apoſtles he would know how they underſtood him. Their conduct is an infallible comment on their maſter's directions. We have many inſtances recorded of their manner, both of the beginning and concluſion of their worſhipping God, and we cannot doubt, had they been informed that they muſt worſhip three diſtinct beings, but they would have done ſo. But, how can we account for it, not *one* ſingle inſtance is recorded at the beginning, middle or end of their petitions or praiſe that ever they united a God the Son and God the Spirit with the Father as the eternal Jehovah. To prove this we need only turn to thoſe paſſages where their Creator is evidently worſhipped. "They lifted up their voice to God with one accord and ſaid Thou art God which haſt made heaven and earth, and the ſea and all that in them is. Grant unto thy ſervants, that with all boldneſs they may ſpeak the word, by ſtretching forth thine hand to heal, and that ſigns and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jeſus." I bow my knee unto the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt the Father of glory may give unto you the ſpirit of wiſdom, &c."

And

And, as in all their petitions to Deity they addreſs the Father alone as the only ſupreme God; ſo in all their concluſions of praiſe and thankſgivings to him, they *never* unite the Son and Spirit with the ſame God: a full demonſtration to me that they did not conſider them as included in the ſame being, as your miniſter ſo confidently affirms. Only attend to what they declare and judge for yourſelves. "Giving thanks always unto God, even the Father, in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye may with one mind and with one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt." "Now unto God, even the Father, be glory for ever and ever." "Now unto him that is God only wiſe, even the Father, be glory in the churches, through Jeſus Chriſt, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. For of him, and through him, and to him are all things."

We have a further confirmation that the Apoſtles conſidered the Father alone as the ſupreme God, by obſerving the manner in which they notice the perſon of Chriſt when they mention him with God the Father, but they never ſtile him God the Son, nor is he ever called by that name when mentioned with the Father. They often unite him with the Father in the ſame verſe, in their devout wiſhes for the increaſe of grace, &c. on account of that mediatorial fulneſs depoſited in him by Jehovah, but it is worthy of your notice, that they never unite him with the Father in their aſcriptions of praiſe to God for what they had received from him. Is not this a plain proof they did not conſider him, as you have been taught, as the ſame God? For if he was poſſeſſed of the ſame perfections, they undoubtedly would have honoured him with the ſame aſcriptions of glory

glory which you do, and ſay it is his due; yes they would have joined with you,

To God the Father, God the Son,
And God the Spirit, three in one,
Be equal praiſe and glory given
By all on earth and all in heaven;

But—Inſtead of this in another tone, We may ſay,
To God the Father—Him alone,
Their pray'rs and praiſes all unite,
As having all the ſacred right
Of Godhead in himſelf:

They ne'er united three in one,
But ſaid, The Father's God alone;
To him their praiſes they addreſs'd,
And him alone as God confeſs'd:
Excluding Son and Spirit.

St. Paul begins his Epiſtle to the Epheſians with wiſhing them grace and peace from God the Father and from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but, to prove that they did not conſider them as the ſame one God, he leaves out Jeſus Chriſt, when thanking God for what he had done for them. Is it not ſtrange, if the apoſtle had believed your doctrine, that he ſhould be guilty of ſuch inconſiſtency; becauſe, had he thought Jeſus Chriſt God, he muſt diſhonour him by not giving him the ſame aſcriptions of glory as you do: Yes, either, you muſt allow that the apoſtle greatly diſhonoured the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in not uniting him with the Father, or you greatly diſhonour the Father by worſhipping Jeſus Chriſt with him, as the one Jehovah. All ought to have their due. * Thus he proceeds in praiſing God,

* Suppoſe the Prince of Wales had interceded with his Majeſty for the pardon of a perſon under the ſentence of high treaſon,

God, &c. Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath predeſtinated us to the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt to himſelf. Unto him be glory in the churches by Jeſus Chriſt. If you examine impartially I think you will find your mode of worſhip has no foundation in ſcripture.

This truth is likewiſe proved from the manner in which they expreſs themſelves in their aſcriptions of praiſe to Jeſus Chriſt. That he is entitled to an high degree of praiſe, I have no doubt, but when Jehovah commands them to acknowledge him as Lord, it is not to ſet him forth as the ſupreme God, but to the glory of God the Father. There are ſome inſtances wherein the Apoſtles aſcribe their acknowledgement of thanks to the perſon of Chriſt, (although there is not one to the perſon of the Spirit; a full proof there never was any ſuch perſon exiſted only in your imaginations) St. Peter thanks Jeſus Chriſt, and ſays, To him

treaſon, and, in conſequence of the Prince's mediation, the King ſhould allow the perſon to come into his preſence, and implore forgiveneſs in the Prince's name, and, after he had petitioned for a time, his Majeſty ſhould call in his Secretary to notify his pardon, and the Prince to ſign it; the man would feel himſelf obliged to the Prince for interpoſing in his behalf, and to his Majeſty for granting him the favour; and no doubt would return an acknowledgement of thanks: What if the man was to ſay to his Majeſty, I return my ſincere thanks to your Son, the Secretary and Yourſelf, as the one ſupreme Governor of England! Would his Majeſty think himſelf honoured by ſuch an aſcription? In ſome ſuch way as this you appear to diſhonour the Father, the only Creator and Governor of the World, by uniting two other ſupreme beings with him, without his authority. If you ſay that your conduct is right, it is evident that the apoſtles are wrong. If Chriſt had ever been conſidered by them as God to be worſhipped with the Father, they would not, as honeſt men, have left him out of any of their prayers or praiſes; but, as a proof they did not conſider him as God, they never united him to worſhip with the Father as the ſame Supreme Being.

be glory, but not a word about his being God or uniting the Father with him. Paul thanks Jeſus Chriſt for what he had done for him, but in the ſame chapter, when praiſing God, never mentions any thing of Chriſt. Now unto the King immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, be honour and glory. Had your teacher concluded for the Apoſtle he would no doubt have added to him, thyſelf and another, as unto three perſons, &c. When St. John repreſents the ſaints in heaven as rendering their high acclamation of praiſe to Jeſus Chriſt for what he had done for them, he leads you to underſtand (if you would lay aſide prejudice and make uſe of your underſtanding) that Jeſus Chriſt is conſidered there in his moſt exalted ſtate, as a diſtinct being from Deity. * To be ſure you will ſay, with Dr. Watts,

"To the great one and three,
That ſeal'd this grace in heav'n
The Father, Son, and Spirit, be
Eternal glory giv'n."

But—If St. John ſpeak true,
A diſtinct glory's giv'n,
As God the Father's due,
Supremacy in heav'n.

The Son makes no ſuch claim,
But owns his Father's right,
To be alone ſupreme;
With him all heav'n unite.

They all with one voice cry, Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain. To him that loved us and waſhed us from our ſins in his blood, and hath made

* Although I am firmly perſuaded that there is but one perſon or being to whom the properties of Supreme Godhead can belong, (two, three, four or five infinites is abſolute nonſenſe

made us kings and prieſts unto God and his Father, to him (obſerve not him and Father as God) be glory and dominion. For he had overcome and was ſet down at his Father's right hand, and a name was given him above all principalities. And unto him every knee ſhall bow and every tongue confeſs that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Thou art worthy, for thou waſt ſlain and haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood. Bleſſing and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that ſits upon the throne (as the one ſupreme being) and unto the Lamb as Mediator who hath redeemed us to God. Thus you learn that the heavenly choir had never learned your infallible creed, if they had it is evident the Apoſtle had no information of it in all his viſions of the heavenly world. This is the repreſentation that I think an unprejudiced Pagan would give you of the manner in which the Almighty is to be worſhipped, as revealed in your Bible. If this man is right you muſt be miſtaken; the ſubject I think deſerves your moſt ſerious attention.

ſenſe) yet there is a ſenſe in which I can allow the fulneſs of Chriſt, as Mediator, [redacted] a comparative infinity, that is, a fulneſs that exceeds all our comprehenſion, that is fully adequate to all our wants, and ſatisfies an infinite God. From the ſcripture repreſentation of that power, wiſdom, &c. depoſited in Chriſt, we may ſuppoſe that he poſſeſſes ten thouſand times more than all created intelligences, and yet be as far from infinite as any of us. I cannot ſee but the foundation of hope is as firm on this ground as yours. It ſecures all the bleſſings of grace and glory to all that come to God in Chriſt's name, and, if you come to Chriſt as *God*, you can have no more. You muſt acknowledge that my views are more conſiſtent with ſcripture, that repreſent the ability of Chriſt to ſave, not becauſe we come to him as God, but, he is able to ſave to the utmoſt all that come unto God by him.—To talk of God appointing that which is infinite in its own nature, appears as abſurd as to ſay that God appointed himſelf to be wiſe or holy, &c.——But orthodoxy muſt be ſupported at the expenſe of reaſon, ſcripture and common ſenſe!

After this enquirer had given theſe reaſons againſt your opinions we will ſuppoſe his curioſity led him to attend your public aſſemblies, to be further inſtructed in the manner you worſhip the God of the land. He would not have been there long before he would have heard your miniſter declare that Jeſus Chriſt was the only independent Jehovah. As his mind was open to conviction, he would naturally expect him to advance ſomething to prove his aſſertion. The following reaſons (which I have often heard from him) he would no doubt offer to confirm his ſentiments: He would appeal to his God that he advanced nothing but what he found revealed in his Word, and therefore in his name demanded your aſſent; and thus he began, We need no other proof that Jeſus Chriſt was God than to refer you to the works he performed: He healed diſeaſes, controuled the elements, caſt out devils, raiſed the dead, &c. Now none but an omnipotent God can do all this, therefore Jeſus Chriſt muſt be the eternal God. This appeared very plauſible, and you had often taken it for demonſtration. But this man's mind not being perverted at this time with human creeds, he was determined to receive nothing but what was contained in his Bible; he had been told it was his only guide, and he would not admit any thing that was contrary to that infallible ſtandard. He opens it and meets with a paſſage that he thought confuted your miniſter, and proved that St. Peter thought no more that Jeſus Chriſt was to be worſhipped as God than the Iſraelites did that they were to worſhip Moſes. Thus he declares, "That Jeſus of Nazareth was A MAN APPROVED OF GOD among them by miracles & wonders & ſigns which God did by him in the midſt of them." This proves that, if God did them by him, he muſt be another being from God.

God. Having found at his firſt outſet, that your miniſter was wrong, he hears with more caution, and keeps his Bible open to examine as he goes along. Your miniſter proceeds (and he is all attention) to obſerve that Jeſus Chriſt told future events, and ſearched the heart, and (ſays he) this can be ſaid of no other but the omniſcient God, therefore we have full proof that Jeſus Chriſt muſt be that very being. Methinks he hears the whole congregation ſay Amen, as if there was not a ſingle doubt but it was true. However he meets with a paſſage that proves the contrary, if it has any meaning: The ſame apoſtle that informs him that Jeſus foretold future events, &c. likewiſe ſays that it was "the revelation which God gave unto him," and that "this he received from the Father;" which proves that whatever wiſdom, &c. Jeſus poſſeſſed it was derived from another, and is an evidence that he was a diſtinct being from Deity, as much as Elijah or Paul. Having proved thus much he liſtens with greater attention, whilſt your miniſter affirms with greater confidence that Jeſus Chriſt is God, becauſe he was to judge the world, and declared that, if the Bible be allowed to be true, this could not be denied; and we defy all the learned Socinians, &c. in the world (ſaid he) to put any other meaning on the words. Here this attentive hearer pauſed, for he perceived the people's eyes all upon him, and they were almoſt ready to conclude that God had directed the miniſter to ſuch texts, to confirm this heſitating youth, in an extraordinary manner. After turning over a few pages, he met with ſome paſſages that, he thought, abſolutely proved your miniſter was miſtaken, if the teſtimony of your Bible is to be credited: thus it reads, "God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs by that

man

man (Jeſus Chriſt) whom he hath ordained. God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt. Of that day knoweth no man, nor the angels, nor the Son, but the Father only. The Father hath committed all judgement unto the Son, and hath given him authority to execute judgement, becauſe he is the Son of Man." Now if Jeſus Chriſt ſpake the truth your miniſter is amuſing the people with falſe doctrine ſetting up his own opinion above Jeſus Chriſt and perverting the ſcripture worſhip of the Almighty. For, as Samuel being appointed of God to judge Iſrael proves that he was not the God of Iſrael, ſo Jeſus Chriſt not knowing the day of Judgement, and being ordained of God to judge the World, and acting under the authority of the Father, as evidently proves that he was not the God of the Gentiles. All this he declared to the miniſter when the ſermon was ended, and added, I hope, Sir, you are not offended with a ſimple heathen for ſpeaking theſe plain Bible-truths that it is impoſſible for you to contradict, without making Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles guilty of aſſerting notorious falſehoods.

Well but replies your miniſter, my young friend, you certainly are too haſty and poſitive in your concluſions; we are very willing that you ſhould think for yourſelf, but by no means can allow you to contradict the whole chriſtian world. I for my part would excuſe your freedom reſpecting myſelf, for I know what it is to be dogmatical and confident; at my firſt ſetting out in religion I was ready at that time to oppoſe our parſon till I got him to ſettle me in the orthodox faith. You will find more reaſon to agree with us when you come to be more uſed to our expreſſions. But you muſt remember that the ſentiments are very dangerous and have led many to ruin. As a learned

brother

brother wiſely obſerved the other day, in my pulpit, to caution my hearers, that he had known ſome that when they fell from the pinacle of Calviniſm, they deſcended from one iſm to another till they got to—Deviliſm. And the opinions you oppoſe have been generally held as *eſſential* to ſalvation, therefore you may depend upon it that we cannot give them up. Beſides you muſt conſider, that you have not heard all that can be ſaid on the ſubject; I acknowledge I have not thought much on thoſe paſſages you have mentioned, but our doctrine does not depend on detached texts, but is interwoven through the whole Bible. If I had time I could prove it in a thouſand places, but I will only call your attention to one now that fully demonſtrates that Chriſt is the Sovereign of the World. Chriſt ſays of himſelf, I have power to lay down my life and I have power to take it again. This, you perceive, proves him to be God, for none but God has power over life. I have not learned (ſays this ſtranger) ſo much of the Engliſh grammar as to be an adept in ſyntax, but I think, Sir, you have injured the ſenſe of the paſſage by leaving out part of the ſentence: (I never knew a Trinitarian do otherwiſe) It follows, But this commandment I received of my Father; therefore if he received it of another he had it not in himſelf. and, as a proof of this, whenever his reſurrection is mentioned it is ſaid to be by the power of the Father. "According to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Chriſt when he raiſed him from the dead, and ſet him at his own right hand in heavenly places." If you have got no better proof than theſe for your doctrine, it is evident that it hath no foundation in ſcripture; but is a mere human tradition. I will declare, Sir, if there is any meaning in your Engliſh language,

that

that Jeſus Chriſt is not the independent Jehovah, nor was he ever united with the Father to be worſhipped as ſuch, becauſe, when it is ſaid that he wrought miracles, had the gift of prophecy, was to judge the world, &c. it was entirely by the appointment and power of another, which he calls his God and Father, and the God and Father of all mankind, and the only perſon he ever commanded his diſciples to worſhip as the one true God.

Here the miniſter was going to leave him abruptly, but he intreated his patience a little longer, to anſwer him one queſtion: I do approve of your worſhipping one God through the Mediator Jeſus Chriſt, and I think I love Chriſt and wiſh to obey him in all things. He has commanded me to remember his dying love, by eating of bread and drinking of wine. I ſhould wiſh to ſit down with you at the Lord's Supper, for, from what I can learn, our difference is very trifling, and I find his inſpired Apoſtles did not agree in all things, yet they lived in harmony and love. Will you grant me this privilege? Here the miniſter's feelings were exerciſed, the goodneſs of his heart was almoſt ready to overcome the badneſs of his creed. He pauſed for a while, but at length replied; It has afforded us pleaſure to behold one of your colour attend our place of worſhip, and eſpecially as it appears that the word has taken ſome effect on your mind; we ſhould have been exceeding happy to have given you the right hand of fellowſhip; but if you had all the ſincerity of a Nathaniel, and the love of a John, we muſt reject you on account of your *heretical* ſentiments. However, as I am but one man, I will hear the opinion of my brethren. Up ſtarts a venerable Deacon, and with a ſtern countenance, in the name of the reſt began, by

ſaying

ſaying, I wonder you ſhould think of aſking ſuch a queſtion, it looks as if you was half an heretic yourſelf; You know what troubleſome beings they are, and that we have lately excluded ſome from us for the ſame abominable opinions, without allowing them to ſay half ſo much as this ſtranger, and can you think we ſhall heſitate about taking one in corrupted with ſuch pernicious principles? If St. Paul himſelf was to propoſe to join us, and held ſuch opinions, we would not receive him: Beſides, you may depend upon it, this man has read ſome of thoſe new heretical books, and is ſure to propagate them, if poſſible, in our congregation; Away with him, away with him!! And they all lifted up their right hand and ſaid, Go and worſhip your Pagan Gods if you pleaſe,—You have no part in David nor inheritance in the ſon of Jeſſe! They parted, and this deſpiſed ſtranger walked penſive away ruminating on the following paſſages, I was a ſtranger and ye took me not in, —Man looketh at the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart.—In every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteouſneſs is accepted of him.—Jeſus heard that they had caſt him out of the ſynagogue.—There came a certain Prieſt that way, and when he ſaw him he paſſed by, and likewiſe a Levite came and looked on him and paſſed by. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed on, came where he was, and when he ſaw him he had compaſſion on him, and brought him to an Inn, and took care of him.

After he had left them, ſome of them thought they had concluded too haſtily, and they agreed to diſpatch a meſſenger to inform him that they wiſhed him to read his Bible with attention for the next four weeks, and meet them again at the month's end, and accordingly he did. Public no-

tice being given that J. C. the Black, was to ſpeak his experience on ſuch a Lord's Day, a vaſt concourſe of people were aſſembled and the miniſter began by addreſſing the Pagan as follows; We feel a pleaſure in meeting you here again, and hope we ſhall find that you are convinced of your error: and are quite ſatisfied we are right, for our ſentiments are ſo clearly revealed that a wayfaring man, though a fool, cannot but diſcern them, if he is ſincere.—The Pagan replies, Since I was with you laſt I have ſpent moſt of my time in examining my Bible, whether there was any account of three divine beings to be worſhipped as one God; and ſo far from this being mentioned in their temple or ſynagogue worſhip every Lord's Day, as you do, and anathematizing all that did not practiſe ſuch a mode as many of you Engliſh people have done. Neither Moſes or the Prophets, Chriſt or his Apoſtles, in the beginning, middle or end of their worſhip, united the Son and Spirit as two other beings with the Father to be worſhipped as one God, but always worſhipped the Father alone as the only independent and Almighty Being. You muſt therefore acknowledge that Chriſt and his Apoſtles were not *infallible*, or that you are *miſtaken*: or, that you have received ſome new revelation from God to confirm your doctrine entirely *unknown* by Chriſt or his Apoſtles. And unleſs you can work a miracle to *prove* your new revelation to be authentic, I ſhall declare it is an impoſition of the prieſt impoſing on the credulity of the people and ought to be rejected. For it is evident to me, and I think muſt appear ſo to every impartial mind, that the worſhip of one Being as the only true Jehovah is written as with a *ſun beam*, throughout the whole of revelation, and that there is *neither precept or precedent*,

precedent, command or example to eſtabliſh or juſtify the uniting two other beings with the Father to worſhip as one God. *Not one ſingle inſtance that you can find within the ſacred pages, if you turn over each leaf, from Geneſis to Revelation, from January to December.* On hearing him deliver this in an audible voice they all appeared as if they were thunderſtruck, a general ſilence for a while pervaded the whole congregation. As there was no reply he proceeded to aſk them a few intereſting queſtions. As Jeſus Chriſt commanded his diſciples to worſhip the Father alone as God, and he himſelf worſhipped no other being, as ſupreme Deity, What right have you to deny me the privileges of his charity, becauſe I will worſhip the Almighty in the ſame manner they did? What authority have you to unite two more beings with the Father to be equally worſhipped as one God, when Jeſus Chriſt commanded and his Apoſtles always practiſed the contrary? I am determined to obey Jeſus Chriſt if you deſpiſe me for it, becauſe I know I ſhall meet with his approbation, and will not that be much better in the end, than to worſhip God to gain your favour? As Chriſt never enjoined ſuch terms of communion, among his Apoſtles, to unite two more beings with the Father to be acknowledged as the one ſupreme, nor ever excluded any for refuſing to do ſo, What right have you to make laws for ſuch practices? When you thus proceed, do you not ſet up your own opinions above Jeſus Chriſt, and pervert divine revelation? Here the miniſter interrupted him and ſaid, My friend, we did not ſend for you here to preach, we wiſh you to ſay no more; we are fearful the people ſhould begin to think for themſelves. It is not a proper place for us to reply to your queſtions, we will meet

you in a more private way and at a more convenient time: He calls on the clerk to give out an hymn that might tend to ſettle the people's minds, for he was very much afraid they would not be able to forget their converſation. He immediately uttered with a loud voice the following lines,

" This infant is th' Almighty God:
" Come to be ſuckled and ador'd.

" God the mighty Maker dies
" For man the creature's ſin."

This, with what followed, was deſigned to have drowned the voice of reaſon which had been heard from the ſimple Pagan's lips, and prevent the plain directions of Jeſus Chriſt from being regarded; and they had, for a time, the deſired effect. How long they may remain in that ſtate is not for me to determine.

I will leave this deſpiſed enquirer, and wiſh him to follow his own convictions and commit himſelf to that God Jeſus did when they would not ſuffer him to live any longer, and your miniſter and the congregation to make the beſt of his remarks; and proceed to addreſs you in a few words further on the ſubject, as inferences from the whole: Chriſtian Brethren, you are the profeſſed friends of revelation, and would wiſh to be thought advocates for its perfection. I have often heard you plead precedent as a proof of the divinity of your doctrine; ſo many eminent ſaints and martyrs died in your faith therefore it muſt be from God. But what right have we to eſtabliſh as divine laws the dying confeſſions of St. Athanaſius or St. Thomas à Becket? theſe were all fallible and liable to error. As we never read of any one ſaint in the Bible, either in life or death, worſhipping a trinity of perſons in one God, their practice alone ought

to

to be our only precedent. You have your Bible in your hands, and that alone ought to be conſulted in all your enquiry how to worſhip the Almighty with acceptance. What have you to do with the Reveries of the Fathers, the Metaphyſics of the Schools, the Confeſſionsof the Dying, or the Creeds of the Living in matters that relate to God and your own conſciences? God has written a copy of his will and given it to you as a perfect rule. I would ſay to you as Chriſt did to thoſe who flocked round him to hear his gracious words, "Why of yourſelves judge ye not what is right." To have recourſe to ſuch ſubterfuges to ſupport our ſentiments is inconſiſtent with our principles as proteſtants, and injurious to religion. What are the plain commands of Jeſus Chriſt left on record for if they are not to be regarded?

Notwithſtanding many have highly applauded your conduct, and think it deſerves to be recorded to your honour, for cenſuring me, as if I was fit for no ſociety except thoſe in the bottomleſs pit, becauſe I will worſhip but one divine being as God. But what ſaith the ſcriptures? I firmly believe, if the language of the Bible is allowed to have any meaning, that it as evidently proves that Jeſus Chriſt is not the ſame being as the Father, or to be united with him to be worſhipped as the ſame God, as it proves that there is any perſon to be worſhipped as ſupreme Deity: Obſerve, The only true God (the Father) ſo loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, &c. ſo Abraham, in obedience to the divine command, gave up Iſaac; and as Iſaac was a diſtinct being from Abraham, ſo was Chriſt from his Father; for all muſt acknowledge when Abraham gave up his ſon, he did not give up himſelf; and, when God gave unto us the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, he certainly gave up another being, and not himſelf.

ſelf. If any man ſin, we have an Advocate and Interceſſor with the Father. Abraham interceded with the Almighty on the behalf of Sodom. Chriſt being placed at the right hand of God, as our Advocate, &c. as plainly proves he was not the Father, he is ſaid to be with, as Abraham's interceding for Sodom proves he was not that God who was diſpleaſed with the Sodomites. There is one God, even the Father, and one Mediator between this God and man, the Man Chriſt Jeſus. Moſes ſtood between God and the Iſraelites as their Mediator. The Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the only Mediator between God and man, is as evidently a diſtinct being from the Father as Moſes was from the God of Iſrael; and it is quite as conſiſtent to ſay that the Iſraelites never had any other God beſide Moſes, as to declare, as you are taught, that Jeſus Chriſt is the only one ſupreme God of the Chriſtians. God anointed Jeſus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghoſt and with power. He raiſed him from the dead and exalted him at his own right hand as a Prince and a Saviour; made him both Lord and Chriſt; Gave him a kingdom, dominion and glory; Committed all the concerns of the Church into his hands, and put all things in ſubjection to him until the day of judgement. The ſame God raiſed up David to be the King and Deliverer of his people Iſrael. Now Jeſus Chriſt being wholly fitted to execute his kingly authority of God, proves that he was another being from the Father, as evident as David, being exalted by Jehovah, to reign over Iſrael, proves he was not the God of Iſrael. Jeſus Chriſt continues to execute the Work of Redemption in theſe offices as God's ſervant; ſo the Apoſtles always regarded him in theſe characters, and never unite him with the Father to be worſhipped as the one God, but always worſhipped the Father alone

alone as poſſeſſed of ſupreme Godhead: and, if St. Paul is to be credited, when Chriſt has executed the truſt depoſed in him of the Father, He himſelf will remain in ſubjection to him with all other beings; and the Father will reign alone as the only independent and unchangeable God; which proves, I think, to a demonſtration, that Jeſus Chriſt is a diſtinct being from Jehovah. However, I demand you to prove the contrary, if you can, and then I will acknowledge I am wrong.

Although you are daily taught to *anathematize* me for holding ſuch ſentiments as I have been deſcribing, yet I think that I have no reaſon to be aſhamed of them, *becauſe*, I can prove they are founded on infallible truth. May I but poſſeſs much of that ſpirit Jeſus diſcovered towards his enemies, when he ſaid "Father, forgive them" and I ſhall have but little to dread from all your terrible exclamations. I lately heard your miniſter declare, in public, that unleſs we loved and revered the Lord Jeſus Chriſt as the one ſupreme God with the Father, we were ſure to have ſentence of *everlaſting damnation* paſſed upon us: But, as we have no account in all the Bible that he ever was worſhipped in that manner, is it not poſſible (notwithſtanding your miniſter's great confidence of the contrary) that the Apoſtles may be gone to heaven, although they never uſed ſuch a mode of worſhipping the Son of God as you are directed. Whatever anſwer your miniſter may reply to this, I would ſay, Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my laſt end be like his. Only let me follow the ſteps of thoſe who imitated Jeſus Chriſt, and all the curſes that you may pronounce againſt me will never ſeparate us. When I reſpect Jeſus Chriſt, in his dignified office as Mediator only, as God's Meſſenger, and worſhip the Father in his name

name, as alone poſſeſſing all the perfections of ſupreme Deity, I think I have a right to require you to prove that my conduct is inconſiſtent with divine revelation, or acknowledge that you cannot be juſtified for cenſuring me for my practice. When I maintain no principles but what are conſonant with infallible truth, is it not reaſonable that I ſhould have the liberty of embracing and propagating them, without being expelled from ſociety, as if infected with the plague, and condemned to eternal torments as one guilty of the blackeſt crimes? When men aſſume the prerogatives of God, as your miniſter and many others do, ought not their claims to be denied and their conduct expoſed?

So many great and learned men encouraging you in your violent oppoſition againſt heretics led me to pay more attention to the ſubject. For as my friend M-rr-s had informed me, that his brethren had begun to be very ſevere in their cenſures, therefore, if my cauſe was bad, I might expect their terrible *Anathemas* for daring to ruſh on their "*thick boſſes*." However my enquiries have given me increaſing evidence of the truth of my ſentiments, and added much to the confirmation and peace of my mind. Although I feel leſs diſaffection towards thoſe who differ from me, yet, I think I can ſay with greater propriety, that it is nothing but ignorance, inattention and prejudice, that leads any to cenſure me for embracing my preſent opinions, and in their maintaining ſuch confidence that you are right. I am aware that in advancing this propoſition I may appear too arrogant to ſome. They will be ready to think "Thus, ſaying, thou reproacheſt us alſo." Well, I only intend to include the guilty, and the innocent cannot be offended. To reflect on the underſtanding of the Prieſts, I know, is a very tender point; and however allow-

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able in a D. D. is almoſt unpardonable from a country ſhepherd. But I think the queſtion ought to be, Is there no foundation for the charge? if there is, it is as juſtifiable from the ſhepherd's cot as the learned academy, and ought to be as much regarded. If Trinitarians in general ſhould think themſelves inſulted by my free remarks, I would juſt obſerve, that I only act according to that golden rule, "Do as I would be done by." Was I poſſeſſed of the piety, learning and good ſenſe of them all, and yet advance thoſe unaccountable things which they do, and call them divine truths, I do not think they would do me any injuſtice if they were to ſay, I did not make a proper uſe of my underſtanding: I know that they have been ſo long in the habit of concluding that they are right, that it is very difficult to convince them that it is even poſſible that they may be miſtaken. But let them conſider how their conduct muſt appear to every impartial mind. The ſcripture mode of worſhipping one God even the Father alone, is plainly made known by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, without ever uniting any other *name*, *perſon*, or *being* to be worſhipped with him as the ſame God, as their only rule; yet they teach the people, every Lord's Day, to unite two other beings with the Father to be worſhipped as the one Jehovah, contrary to the expreſs command of Jeſus Chriſt and the practice of his inſpired Apoſtles, inſtructing their hearers to deſpiſe and condemn all that will not approve of their unſcriptural mode, calling all this by the name of holy zeal for divine truth, and declare it is the only ſcriptural method of worſhipping Almighty God. If ſuch conduct does not prove that they have not paid a proper attention to the ſubject, it certainly proves ſomething worſe, and what that is I leave with you to determine.

When I worſhip the Father alone as God, I will affirm, that I worſhip him as Chriſt commanded, and according to apoſtolic example, and I demand you to prove the *contrary*, or acknowledge to thoſe who have juſtified your proceedings againſt me, that they have led you into an error. This might make them more cautious in future of countenancing ſuch *unchriſtian* practices, and you more careful of regarding the directions of fallible men, when they contradict divine revelation. "For whether it be right in the ſight of God to obey men rather than God, judge ye."

WORSHIP THE FATHER, ſays Jeſus our guide,
And ne'er mentions any to worſhip beſide,
What right have mankind his laws to reverſe,
And join any other with him to addreſs?
What thanks they deſerve, I leave you to gueſs.
Such folly, for virtue has paſs'd in *diſguiſe*;
As if ſlighting the Bible was the way to grow wiſe!
But ſurely, if Chriſt is our maſter alone,
All human traditions we ought to diſown;
Let *prieſts* cry, Lo here! I'll my captain obey,
And venture to follow, when he leads the way:
Let'em rail and condemn in language ſevere,
While Jeſus approves, their wrath I'll not fear.

I make no doubt but your miniſter will tell you (as many others have done,) that he does not mean what he ſays, to evade what I have proved his ſentiments lead unto. Well, if he ſuſpects the truth of what he ſo repeatedly affirms, that there are three diſtinct perſons or beings to be worſhipped as one ſupreme God, I will give him credit for the poſition; I will take it for granted to be true. But as there appears ſomething rather extraordinary in this, I think it wants a little explanation. Your miniſter muſt have an amazing authoritative

thoritative or enchanting way of delivering his doctrine to make people believe it, (for many ſay they do) when he tells them he means no ſuch thing. Surely he muſt have a vaſt ſtore of pulpit eloquence to charm your ears, or a great deal of prieſtly power to force your aſſent—to be able to propagate opinions amongſt you with ſucceſs, that he himſelf does not believe to be true. Although he has advanced the ſame things amongſt you for many years, he has always kept this matter ſecret till now; perhaps he has never been queſtioned on the ſubject before, and that might be the reaſon of the concealment. But, muſt not he be driven very hard to have divulged it at this time, when the public mind is ſtirred up to make theſe obſervations on his conduct, and call upon him to give a reaſon for his opinions? If he has any ſubſtantial arguments to ſupport his cauſe they certainly now are demanded, but if he can offer no better, will they not ſuſpect that he may be miſtaken, notwithſtanding his great poſitivity. If it is true, (and I think there is ſufficient evidence to confirm it) that miniſters do not mean what they ſay when they explain the Bible, and aſſert there are three perſons or beings to be worſhipped as one ſupreme Deity, I think it is time that the hearers were more in earneſt in examining what they hear, if they wiſh ſucceſs to nothing but Bible-truth and their own edification. Does it not argue that people are very credulous, when they can embrace a man's ſentiments when he tells them he does not mean what he ſays; and is it not highly unbecoming you, as men and chriſtians, to receive any [redacted] doctrine as divine on ſuch a foundation? The whole myſtery & iniquity of prieſtcraft is ſupported by the credulity of the people. Let but the people be determined to make uſe of their reaſon and think for themſelves

ſelves (which they ought to do) and the impoſition of prieſts would meet with its juſt deſert,—oppoſition,—contempt,—and deſtruction.

I am aware that this reflection may be thought too ſevere by ſome reſpecting their ſubject, but as I am perſuaded there is much of this ſpirit in too many, I think it ought to be ſet forth in its proper light. It is the only foundation that all tyranny over conſcience is built upon, and it never can ceaſe till this is deſtroyed. I do not know that perſecution ſhould be ſpared any more in Biſhop Cranmer than in Biſhop Bonner, yea, I think the former is more execrable, becauſe it is covered with the garb of piety, and deſerving ſeverer cenſures. Your oppoſition to me is only becauſe I will not adopt your unintelligible creed, but will worſhip the Almighty according to Chriſt's command. If your miniſter ſhould be offended becauſe I declare he does not know what he means, I ſhould be obliged to him if he would explain himſelf; and if he has any meaning and can inform us what it is, he will be acquitted from the charge. If he means that there are three perſons properly equal and eternal, and that none of theſe have any ſort of ſuperiority over the reſt, they are to all intents and purpoſes *three Gods*. For if each of them, ſeparately conſidered, be poſſeſſed of all divine perfections, they muſt be as properly *three Gods*, as three perſons poſſeſſed of all human attributes muſt be three men.

Therefore it appears as inconſiſtent with reaſon and as abſurd to ſay that God is numerically one, as it is to ſay that Peter, James and John, are one man. If he ſuppoſes that the Father is the fountain of Deity, and that the Son and Spirit are derived from him as the rays from the ſun, or the ſtreams from the fountain, ſtill the Father will poſſeſs

poſſeſs a ſuperiority over them, and an originality peculiar to himſelf, therefore they cannot on that ſcheme be the ſame being. If he means (and I do not think it poſſible for him to have any other meaning) that God acts as one being in different offices, as if we were to ſay of any man, that he was the father of a family, executor to his brother, and ſurety for a friend; but this deſtroys the notion of three perſons and reduces them to three names.

But—He has a meaning, and, no doubt,
Some may have ſenſe enough to find it out."

As a further proof of the unintelligibleneſs and inconſiſtency of your language, I have obſerved the great difference you make between Jeſus Chriſt at one time and another. When you talk of his coming into this World to take our nature, you ſet him forth as the Almighty God; (though he himſelf never does) but when you mention his leaving the World and taking his place in heaven, it is as though he had loſt all his divinity, and was only a man. This was particularly verified at a place of worſhip, a few days ago, near me, in the ſinging, which I could not help remarking: The Clerk to ſhew his zeal for orthodoxy gives out the following lines,

" Down from his ſtarry throne on high,
" Th' Almighty Saviour comes,
" Lays his bright robes of glory by,
" And feeble fleſh aſſumes."——

I pauſed, for it appeared by ſuch language as if the people thought the Almighty had left the government of heaven to ſome of the angelic hoſt. If I had joined them I muſt have quite forgot

Paul's

Paul's direction (which I ſuppoſe they did) to "Sing with the underſtanding," for what they meant no one, I thought, could ever find out. But this did not laſt long, the poet ſoon changed the ſcene, and ſends the ſame perſon to heaven in a different form; places him there without one ray of divinity on his head.

Then through the clouds aſcends to God,
'Midſt ſhouts of loftieſt praiſe,

There he our great High Prieſt appears
Before his Father's throne,
Him for his Father and his God
He ſhall for ever own.

Thus we ſee it was only the poet's fancy, or the orthodox creed that would make us believe the Almighty left heaven. When the poet returned to his reaſon, and the divine to his Bible, they place Jeſus Chriſt as a man at the right hand of God, &c. I could not help ſaying, "We have ſeen ſtrange things to day," and penned down the following lines at the concluſion:

Strange—If Jeſus was th'Almighty God
When born an infant here,
That he ſhould ne'er that truth record,
Or make it to appear!

Strange—That he, ſo full of power,
Should never make it known,
But tell us that in every hour
His ſtrength was not his own.

How ſtrange—that Chriſt ſhould loſe his pow'r,
His dignity divine;
And cry to God in his laſt hour
For ſtrength—though quite reſign'd.

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'Tis yet more ſtrange—when rais'd to heav'n
He ne'er his Godhead own'd,
But tell's them there his power was giv'n
And as ſuch they him crown'd.

If God's the ſame—can never change,
Yet ſuffer, bleed and die,
Such language ſure is very ſtrange
To ſay of the Moſt High.

God's nature's one, he fills one place,
And yet it muſt be two,
If Chriſt left heav'n to ſave our race,
One God above, and one below.

There's one thing yet more ſtrange than all,
That men ſhould ever ſay,
This ſyſtem's plain—and e'er it call
The ſure and only way
To worſhip God—and pray.

As ſtrange as this may all appear,
'Tis not more ſtrange than true,
Such language you will often hear,
Howe'er diſcordant to the ear,
From pulpits—not a few.

Chriſt's own commands to worſhip God
With pleaſure I have view'd;
But yet how ſtrange if he was God
Himſelf he ſhould exclude,

None but the Father to adore
As God——did Chriſt e'er ſay,
His word I will regard before
All creeds—i'the preſent day.

Our religion is a reaſonable ſervice, and we are called to give our reaſons for it. I muſt object to your creed till you can give me ſome further explanation, for the more I have yet examined, the further

further I have been convinced that you do not underſtand it, or explain to others what you mean. * I have written my ſentiments in as intelligible a manner as I could, that you might know for what you have condemned me. When I aſſert that there is but one being to be worſhipped as the ſupreme God, I would wiſh to be underſtood to mean what I ſay; becauſe I can prove, there is but one being or perſon in ſcripture that is repreſented to poſſeſs *all* the perfections neceſſary to ſupreme Deity; and this perſon is called the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and no other is ever united with him when he is called God, as the ſame being. And when I declare that I believed that Jeſus Chriſt was a diſtinct perſon from the Father, I mean what I affirm. If you aſked me whether I thought him a human or divine perſon, I would ſay that he was an human perſon, becauſe, I can prove that he poſſeſſed all the properties belonging to humanity. Real and proper humanity as evidently conſtitute an human perſon, in my view, as real divinity does a divine perſon. And this the ſcriptures poſitively decide of God and of Jeſus Chriſt. Or the divine nature or ſubſtance of the Father gives him a ſeparate exiſtence from all other beings, and conſti-

* "He that goeth about to ſpeak of the Myſtery of the Trinity, and doth it by words and names of men's invention, talking of eſſences and exiſtences, hypoſtaſes and perſonalities priorities, incoequalities, &c. and unity in pluralities, may amuſe himſelf, and build a tabernacle in his head, and talk ſomething he knows not what; but the good man, who feels the power of the Father and to whom the Son is become wiſdom and righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption, in whoſe heart the love of the Spirit of God is ſhed abroad, this man, though he underſtand nothing of what is unintelligible, yet he alone underſtands the Doctrine of the Trinity."

Dr. TAYLOR.

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tutes his divine and diſtinct perſonality; ſo the human properties of Chriſt divide him from all others, and conſtitute his perſonal humanity. Thus Jeſus is a man that had a ſeparate ſubſiſtence of his own, and the Father is the one ſelf-exiſtent, independent and unchangeable God. There is one God even the Father, and one Mediator between God and man the man Chriſt Jeſus; and I worſhip this one God through the Mediator, and can plead poſitive law and primitive example for my conduct. If you aſk me, why I do not chooſe to make uſe of other people's terms, it really is, becauſe I do not underſtand them; and as they cannot give me any information what they mean, I think it quite unreaſonable in them to require me to make uſe of their words, or inflict any puniſhment on me for the omiſſion. If they think well to make any uſe of their old phraſes, and will not uſe their reaſon to examine what they mean, and the people love to have it ſo, I am not in the leaſt diſpoſed to quarrel with them about it; only let me have the liberty of explaining my meaning, in my own language and that of my Bible, without being perſecuted, and we may be uſeful and happy with one another, notwithſtanding we may not agree in every punctilio.

You will probably be offended with me for repreſenting you as *perſecutors*, but, ſo long as you approve of ſuch practices, I cannot ſee any thing amiſs in giving you that appellation. I am a Friend to the *Rights of Man*, and would have every man called by the name his conduct entitles him unto; this would be a likely means to convict impoſtors and reward the upright. I know that you have been ready to think that perſecution was confined to the Romiſh Devotée or the vulgar profligate, but on examination you will find you have

been miſtaken, and that it's baneful influence is far more extenſive, even among yourſelves, although you are not willing to own it. To define what perſecution for religion is, will determine whether the charge is juſt: I believe it is generally underſtood to mean a cenſuring a perſon for not worſhipping the Almighty according to the dictates of his conſcience and God's revealed will, although not juſt in the ſame manner that I do. It is not whether our reſentment go to take away the character, the property or the life, but, if either, it ſprings from the ſame nefarious principle and deſerves the ſame name. If any one was to propoſe a marriage union to take place between you and the church of Rome, I could with propriety forbid the banns, on account of that near affinity that already ſubſiſts between you. Not the vileſt cruelty recorded in the annals of hiſtory deſerves the odious name of perſecution more than your treatment of me, becauſe of your advantages of knowing better. Perſecution is execrable from a Roman Pontiff, but much more ſo from thoſe who have proteſted againſt the tyranny of Rome, and profeſs to be the followers of the Prince of Peace, as Mr. Fuller very juſtly remarks in his Tenth Letter, " That it would be a far greater evil, in the preſent day, to perſecute men for adhering to the dictates of their conſciences than it was before the rights of conſcience were ſo fully underſtood." Now, as your oppoſition to me is for nothing elſe, but becauſe I will worſhip God according to the dictates of my conſcience and God's revealed will, it certainly deſerves no better name than perſecution and to be reprimanded with ſome degree of ſeverity. For, either you muſt acknowledge, that you are as ignorant of the rights of conſcience, as your forefathers, or that your conduct (and all that have

encouraged

encouraged you) in oppoſing me is a greater evil than it would have been in them, Mr. F. himſelf being judge. If the plea which Mr. F. urged in favour of Calvin for his ſevere treatment of Servetus had any weight to extenuate the guilt of his conduct, becauſe it was the error of that dark age, the conduct of you and all that have encouraged your oppoſition to me muſt be more criminal, becauſe it is a far greater evil, in the preſent day, to perſecute men for adhering to the dictates of their conſciences than it was before the rights of conſcience were ſo fully known. Had I embraced my opinions without examination, and from mercenary ends, or with a view to leſſen my obligation to moral duties, or encourage myſelf in paths of impiety, you would have been juſtifiable in cenſuring my conduct: He that knows my heart will witneſs that this was not the caſe; but that I acted purely from a regard to his truth and to glorify his great name: therefore your treatment of me deſerves the name of perſecution of the moſt *odious* kind. Deſpiſing and condemning me as a moſt infamous character becauſe I was determined to act according to the dictates of my conſcience and the expreſs commands of my God. This is the *heinous crime* for which you have been encouraged to exclude me from your ſociety and treat me with the greateſt contempt. It is not becauſe I take delight to expoſe your failings, that I mention theſe things, but to ſhew to the public that perſecution for conſcience is more deteſtable from proteſtant diſſenters in the eighteenth century than it was in the darkeſt ages of popiſh ignorance, and that the conduct of all that adhere to ſuch practices is diſgraceful to Chriſtianity, and ought to be *eradicated* out of the chriſtian world.

I conſider a reception of the doctrines and a ſubmiſſion to the laws of revelation of infinite importance to mankind; and think nothing too dear to

ſacrifice to ſpread the knowledge of them in the World. You have ſtopped my mouth from ſpeaking the truth as much as in you lay, but no thanks to you but the government under which I live that you can go no *further*. As my life is ſpared, and I have the privilege of uſing my pen, I thought it my duty to give my reaſon for rejecting your doctrine in this public manner. I think it right that I ſhould ſhew my diſapprobation of every corruption of the chriſtian ſyſtem, and my firm attachment to divine truth. I believe that the worſhip of three perſons or beings as the one ſupreme God a mere human invention, and tends to make men Infidels as much as any thing in the World. Therefore when we hear of infidelity making ſuch rapid ſtrides among mankind, we ought to remove every impediment out of the way of the progreſs of truth. The Bible is not put into our hands as a ſyſtem of philoſophy to correct and enlarge at our pleaſure, but as a perfect model for our imitation. I am perſuaded that the additions made to religion by its profeſſed friends have done it more real injury than all the oppoſition from its bittereſt foes. Could we but ſet it forth in its native ſimplicity, I make no doubt but it would ſoon become invulnerable to the attacks of its moſt violent enemies: but it is connecting with it ſo many human appendages that give its oppoſers ſo much juſt cauſe for cenſure and triumph. As we obſerve the principal ground of oppoſition ariſes from the ſuppoſed defects, and theſe defects owe their exiſtence to our *folly*, we certainly ought to uſe every effort in our power to remove them. For it is evident (I think to every impartial obſerver,) while we continue to vindicate the lawfulneſs or expediency of *human* creeds, the deiſt will be furniſhed with ſome powerful weapons to carry on the conteſt, and the cauſe of chriſtianity muſt be thereby retarded. As perfec-

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tion is ſtamped on every part of the ſacred code, the only way to prove that we admire it, in that form, and wiſh it to appear and proſper in no other, is to reject every thing that deviates from that ſtandard. Impartially try what I have written by that infallible rule, and receive or reject it according to the evidence, for or againſt, from that divine touchſtone alone. This I think I have a right to demand, and what you allow you are bound to do.

From what I have ſaid, I think, the public will be better able to determine who ought to be moſt alarmed at the conſequences of their ſentiments. To keep you from examining and embracing my opinions, you are conſtantly told that my notions will lead to ſomething dreadful, but that there is no danger from your own, you are ſure to be right if you do but hold them faſt. This reminds me of a remark of Solomon's, "He that is firſt in his own cauſe ſeemeth juſt; but his neighbour cometh and ſearcheth him." Had not ſomething like this taken place, no doubt, many would have ſaid "Ye are the people, and wiſdom ſhall die with you." Whatever we may have thought of our manner of worſhipping the Almighty, ſo far as we have deviated from the rule laid down in his word, it does not deſerve the name of divine worſhip. I do not mean to ſay that for every defect in our manner the Almighty will finally reject us, but whatever is contrary to his revealed will muſt meet with his diſapprobation. There are ſome things more diſpleaſing to him than others, but perhaps nothing more ſo than for men to claim his prerogatives; and this is always done whenever men ſet their opinions above divine law. God is jealous of his own honour and will not ſuffer any to rob him of his glory with impunity. For any to attempt to alter or correct the plans of Jehovah is the greateſt folly. His threatenings in Rev. 22.

are very ſevere againſt all who mutilate his word; that either add or diminiſh from the infallible rule. As you charge me with perverting the ſcripture, let us all examine impartially to which of us the threatening is moſt applicable. I will appeal to the whole world, when I worſhip one divine being, the Father, as the only ſupreme God, through Chriſt the Mediator, whether I add or diminiſh from the ſacred canon? I will likewiſe appeal to you and all mankind, when you worſhip three beings as one God, whether you do not take from it its plain, obvious and only meaning, and add that of your own, that was not known or practiſed by Chriſt or his followers? Now if this is true, and I believe you cannot prove the contrary, let the public, let the Almighty determine which of us has the moſt reaſon to be afraid of conſequences.

Very probably you will think I ought to have heard your defence, before I had concluded with ſuch poſitivity. You will recollect, that I told you in my former letter that when the ſcriptures are plain and determinate, I did not heſitate. Now the Bible as undeniably proves, that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt did not command his followers to unite him and another with the Father to worſhip as the one God, and that the Apoſtles never did worſhip God in that mode, as that it proves there is no command to worſhip St. Peter or St. Paul, or the virgin Mary, therefore we have a right to aſſert it with equal confidence. Yea, I will affirm that if Jeſus Chriſt did not command us to worſhip the Father alone as the only ſupreme God, and if the Apoſtles did not act according to his command, we cannot prove that there is any one precept or example recorded in the ſcriptures to worſhip the Almighty. However, as I do not profeſs to be infallible, I demand you to prove the contrary; and the public will know that I am miſtaken, and juſtify your conduct; but if you

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cannot prove that I am wrong, will they not have reaſon to ſay, The voice of your brother's character cries with a charge of guilt from your doors? Whilſt I can plead poſitive law and primitive example in rejecting your mode of worſhip, am not I juſtifiable at the tribunal of reaſon, at the tribunal of conſcience, and at the tribunal of God? becauſe, as the celebrated Calvin very juſtly remarks, "It ſavours of barbarity." The word Trinity is barbarous, inſipid, prophane, a human invention, grounded on no teſtimony of God's word, the popiſh god, or idol, altogether unknown to the Prophets and Apoſtles.

Thus, Brethren, I have laid before you ſome further thoughts on the Doctrine of the Trinity for your information; I might add ſomething more by way of perſuaſion, but if this has no effect to convince your underſtandings that you are miſtaken, I may deſpair of ever prevailing to perſuade you to relinquiſh your preſent opinions and here lay down my pen: for, "if ye believe not Moſes and the Prophets, neither will ye be perſuaded though one roſe from the dead."

I remain, Dear Brethren,

Your Faithful Friend,

And Affectionate Brother

In the Bonds of of the Goſpel,

EDWARD SHARMAN.

Northamptonſhire,
Cotteſbrook, May 7th, 1796.

POSTSCRIPT.

YOU ſeem to think it ſuch a capital error to give up the Pre-exiſtence of Chriſt, that it tends to deſtroy the only foundation of true Chriſtianity; whereas, I believe, if you examine your Bible impartially, you will not find the leaſt ground for ſuch a doctrine. What do you mean by the term? I have never been able to underſtand that you had any meaning, and it is evident that the general tenor of Scripture contradicts ſuch an opinion, That one God exiſted before Chriſt was born, there is no doubt, and that the ſame God is the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the God and Father of all mankind; but we have no accont that God ſent his Son into the world till he was made of a woman. The apoſtles inform us that God delivered his will to the fathers of the Old Teſtament by the Prophets, but in theſe laſt days ſpake to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things. There was a man ſent from God, whoſe name was John; and there was another man ſent from the ſame God, whoſe name was Jeſus: Now John being ſent from God no more proves that he exiſted before he was born than that Jeſus Chriſt ſaying he came from God proves his pre-exiſtence. If we attend to the plain language of Inſpiration, I think it will prove that the promiſed Meſſiah was to be a perſon raiſed up from the human race from the ſeed of the woman, and not a ſecond perſon in Deity. The Prophets foretold of his coming in that character, and he himſelf and his apoſtles declare him to be a Man like unto his brethren. Was he to appear in our world

as the Great Prophet of the Church, to make known the will of God more perfectly than any before him? He was that Prophet the Lord our God would raiſe up like unto Moſes from the ſeed of Abraham. Did he act as a Prieſt or Mediator between God and man? He ſprang from the tribe of Judah: and to capacitate him for that office, he muſt be a perſon that partook of all the properties of humanity, be made in all things, like unto his brethren, ſin only excepted. Chriſt glorified not himſelf by taking this office of his own accord, but was called of God as was Aaron. God even his God anointed him above his fellows. And in this character he ſtands as the Lamb ſlain in the preſence of God in heaven as our interceſſor. Was Jeſus Chriſt deſigned of God to be the King of his church? God had ſworn with an oath that of the fruit of David's loins he would raiſe up Chriſt to ſit on his throne. And St. Peter informs us that God had fulfilled his promiſe made unto the fathers. The ſame Jeſus which they had crucified, God had raiſed up, and exalted at his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, made him both Lord and Chriſt. Thus it appears that the word of God eſtabliſhes the perſonal humanity of Chriſt as a diſtinct being from God, in the moſt expreſs manner poſſible: That he poſſeſsed no other nature at his birth than other men, but "increaſed in wiſdom and ſtature, and in favour with God and man." And, as the Captain of our ſalvation was not perfect as God, (as you ſay) but made perfect through ſuffering, he was to be called "Emmanuel, God with us." The Apoſtle ſeems to explain what is meant by that phraſe when he ſays, God was in Chriſt, Spake to us by his Son, Bleſſed us with all bleſſings in him, Is well pleaſed through him, Accepted us in the beloved, &c.

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That is, Chriſt is all in all as the medium of communication from God, and the way of acceſs to God. And thus there appears a great propriety in the name Emmanuel being given to Jeſus Chriſt, although he ever was and ever will remain a diſtinct being from Jehovah. May we all experience a greater meaſure of thoſe bleſſings that flow through him from the Father, as the only true God, and we ſhall be more uſeful and happy, ſhall be the daily prayer of your ſincere well wiſher, &c.

E. SHARMAN.

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FINIS.

BRITISH 6 OC 80 MUSEUM

ERRATA.

Page 11, *line* 1, *for* It a ſenſe *read* It is a ſenſe.
11, *line* 14, *for* ſo *read* do.
29, *line* 2 *in the note*, *for* and a comparative *read* a comparative.
37, *line* 16, *for* charity *read* church.
50, *line* 24, *for* Or *read* As.
52, *line* 6, *for* for not worſhipping *read* for worſhipping.